

The Line

A Newsletter for and about Arkansas Drug Courts July 2012 Vol. 43, No. 5

National Perspective on Drug Court Effectiveness

In the June/July issue of *Courts Today*, author Michael Grohs looks into the issue of drug courts effectiveness. The article highlights many important facts that confirm that drug courts have been proven an effective sentencing alternative for drug addicted individuals in the criminal justice system. Grohs points out that according to the National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP), there has been more research on drug courts effectiveness over the past 20 years than nearly all other programs.

Drug courts are designed to treat the high risk/high need offender who suffers from chronic drug addiction. "Drug court is intense. It's not geared toward someone who is not addicted." says Chris Deutsch with the NADCP. Statistical information for drug courts demonstrate positive effects on recidivism, crime reduction, addiction and compliance with supervision. Douglas Marlowe, Chief of Science, Law and Policy at NADCP wrote, "We know beyond a reasonable doubt that Drug Courts significantly reduce drug use and crime and do so with substantial costs savings." Independent meta-analyses found that 75% of offenders enrolled in a drug court program remained arrest-free for at least two years after leaving the program. The reductions in crime also lasted from three to fourteen years, with these reductions as much as *45% more than other methods of sentencing*. With these positive results, the criminal justice system will continue to support the use of drug courts.

Nothing is predestined: The obstacles of your past can become the gateways that lead to new beginnings.



Data Show More Than 23 Million Adults Living in U.S. Once Had Drug or Alcohol Problems



11 million American adolescents and young adults ages 12-29 need help with drug and alcohol

New, national survey results released by The Partnership at Drugfree.org and MetLife Foundation



— Survey results found that past-month heavy marijuana use has increased among U.S. high school students since 2008. The Partnership Attitude Tracking Study, sponsored by MetLife Foundation, found that 9 percent of teens (nearly 1.5 million) who smoked marijuana heavily did so at least 20 times in the past month. Overall, past-month heavy marijuana use is up 80 percent among U.S. teens since 2008.

This marks an upward trend in teen marijuana use over the past three years. The last time marijuana use was this widespread among teens was in 1998 when past month use of marijuana was at 27 percent. “These findings are deeply disturbing as the increases we’re seeing in heavy, regular marijuana use among high school students can spell real trouble for these teens later on,” said Steve Pasierb, President and CEO of The Partnership at Drugfree.org. “Heavy use of marijuana - particularly beginning in adolescence - brings the risk of serious problems and our data show it is linked to involvement with alcohol and other drugs as well. Kids who begin using drugs or alcohol as teenagers are more likely to struggle with substance use disorders when compared to those who start using after the teenage years.”

“For some, addiction is a force as strong as gravity...”- author,

Michael Grohs of *Courts Today*.

- ♦ *One out of every 100 Americans is incarcerated*
- ♦ *80% of those offenders abuse alcohol or drugs*
- ♦ *50% of them are clinically addicted*
- ♦ *60-80% of these drug abusers commit a drug-driven offense upon release from prison*
- ♦ *95% return to using once released.*

A survey conducted by the World Health Organization found that, despite having strict laws, the U.S. has the highest level of illegal drug use in the world.

LOCAL DRUG COURT NEWS

In May, local drug courts at Russellville and Fort Smith conducted special ceremonies to welcome the NADCP All Rise America Motorcycle Relay. Fort Smith is home to the Sebastian County Drug Court which has been in operation just under 10 years and currently has 150 participants. Judge Stephen Tabor held a short ceremony in front of the courthouse. The local press had turned out to cover the Gavel Hand-Off, with Dr. Kirk handing the All Rise Gavel to Glen Bergstrom, a rider with the Survivors Clean and Sober Motorcycle Club. The group then travelled west on I-40 to meet with the Russellville Drug Court and Russellville community leaders. The Pope County Drug Court has been in operation since 2004 and has approximately 50 participants. The Pope County Drug Court put together a community education breakfast and invited key members of the community. Judge Dennis Sutterfield provided a powerful and persuasive argument for why Drug Court is important. "I was very skeptical," he told the crowd. "Then I saw how the court pulled together resources we otherwise wouldn't have. As a judge I found that I could make a difference with Drug Court. I can now say without hesitation that this has been a great success."



Sebastian County Drug Court Coordinator Shirl Page with NADCP All Rise America Relay member. (above) Ft. Smith motorcycle riders (below).



Michael Chumley (Drug Court counselor), Kayla Beck (Drug Court counselor), Judge Dennis Sutterfield (Drug Court Judge), Don Sims (rider), Phillip Hubbard (Pope County Juvenile Officer and carrier of the gavel), Liza Brown (Deputy Prosecutor), Alisa Hilburn (Drug Court Administrative Specialist)



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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Webinars and Resources



**WE'RE ON THE
WEB!!**

**HTTP://
COURTS.ARKANSAS
.GOV**

“Translating Drug Court Research into
Practice” at:

<http://research2practice.org/>

NDCI’s “Tune In Tuesdays” Webinar series:

[http://www.ndci.org/training/online-trainings-webinars/
webinars](http://www.ndci.org/training/online-trainings-webinars/webinars)

And other useful links.....

<http://www.courtinnovation.org/topic/drug-court>

www.drugfree.org

<http://www.nadcp.org/all-rise-america-blog/>

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vBsswL1-
PVU&feature=player_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vBsswL1-PVU&feature=player_embedded)

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